

REMARKSAmendments to the Claims

Claim 20 has been amended to more specifically point out a centralized audio conference mixer. This amendment is supported in the specification at page 2, line 18 to page 3, line 9, for example.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 20-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Allen et al. (WO 94/18779). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Allen et al. teach an audio telephone conferencing apparatus and method that feature a plurality of digital signal processing units. Each digital signal processing unit, which is associated with a particular phone line, responds to data on the associated incoming phone line and generates a status signal representing the particular status of that phone line. The status signal is transferred along a common bus for access by other digital signal processing units. In turn, each digital signal processing unit responds to status signals received from the others to generate an output teleconference signal (Abstract; page 2, ll. 19-28).

Allen provides a system wherein each digital signal processor generates a separate output signal (i.e. separate summed conference audio) for each of the phone channels supported by the signal processor. This system architecture is inefficient because the same task (i.e., summing the signals) is executed by a number of processors. This redundancy in the prior art methods is mentioned in the present specification. See page 1, line 18 to page 2, line 3.

The present invention provides a system with a centralized conference mixer that reduces repetitive tasks from being distributed among a plurality of signal processors (page 4, ll. 5-7). The present invention provides a *centralized mixer* that sums all of the speaking conferees into a *summed conference signal*. The summed conference signal can then be post processed to remove the audio associated with a speaker from the conference signal that is to be sent to that speaker. This architecture is more efficient than that of Allen because the

summing is centralized rather than repeated for every conference channel. This aspect should be more apparent in claim 20, which has been amended to specify a centralized audio conference mixer.

Allen does not appear to teach or suggest each and every limitation of claim 20. Specifically, Allen does not teach a *centralized* audio conference mixer to sum and provide a *summed conference signal* as recited in claim 20. Rather, Allen appears to teach a digital signal processor that receives audio signal from a single incoming caller on a particular phone line.

Turning now to claim 25 Applicant submits that the above described concept of centralized summing to provide a summed conference signal is already apparent in the claim in its present form. Specifically, the claim recites:

summing, at said first digital signal processor, said received digitized audio signals associated with said speaking conference participants, thereby generating a summed conference signal;

and

removing, at said second digital signal processor, the digitized audio signal associated with each said listed conference participant, thereby generating a customized conference audio signal associated with each said listed conference participant

Thus, the claim in its present form clearly states that the summing to generate a summed conference signal is performed at a first processor (i.e., centralized mixing) and the post processing step of removing the particular speaker's signal is performed by a second processor. As discussed above, Allen does not appear to teach or suggest this centralized architecture. Rather, Allen appears to teach one processor per channel, each processor summing all speaking signals except the signal corresponding to that channel's conferee. Thus, essentially the same summing operation is repeated by each channel's processor. Allen does not teach or suggest each and every limitation of claim 25, specifically, the first and second processors recited above.

In view of the above remarks, Allen does not anticipate the methods of independent claims 20 and 25 because Allen does not teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 20-31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

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A General Power of Attorney has been filed on April 1, 2004 and resubmitted on December 29, 2004. Accordingly, please change the address for correspondence in this matter to Customer No. 29855, as follows:

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Respectfully submitted,


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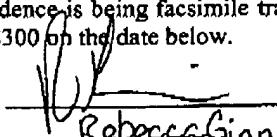
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October 28, 2005
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Rebecca Giani